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AN

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Massachusetts Agricultural College,

ON THE OCCASION OF GRADUATING ITS FIRST CLASS,

JULY 19, 1871.

BY MARSHALL P. WILDER.

BOSTON :

WRIGHT & POTTER, PRINTERS, 79 MILK STREET
(CORNER OF FEDERAL STREET).

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ADDRESS.

Mr. President and Friends of Agriculture.

The occasion which has called us together is of no ordinary importance. We meet to commemorate, by the services of this day, the graduation of the first class of students from the first Agricultural College of our own State or of our own New England, an occasion which we believe will be made memorable as the beginning of a new era in the cause of scientific as well as practical agriculture in our good old Commonwealth.

By a merciful Providence I stand before you to-day as the senior member of the Board of Trustees, and I propose, in the discharge of the duty assigned me, to record for the benefit of those who may come after us, in as brief a manner as possible, the history and progress of efforts for the advancement of agricultural science in our land, and especially of those which have culminated in the establishment of the Massachusetts Agricultural College. As this is the first public ad-

dress, or ceremony, in connection with the establishment of the College, it has been thought desirable that it should be made historical, embracing an account, not only of its origin and progress, but embodying, in some tangible form for preservation, a recollection of the primary causes which prompted the pioneers and leaders of American agriculture to associate together for its advancement—a history which should be placed on record for the encouragement of future generations, as well as for the consolation of those who have borne the heat and burden of the past.

Few things are more apparent, and I am certain none more gratifying to this assembly, than the increased interest now manifested in the progress and prosperity of our Agricultural Colleges, especially in that of our own Commonwealth. Those who have lived to witness this slow but sure advance in public sentiment, cannot but rejoice that confidence, and sympathy in our cause have at last been inspired, a confidence which we believe will ripen into a general and abiding interest, for the promotion and welfare throughout our country of these institutions. The utility and importance of these are no longer questioned as of doubtful tendency, and we rejoice in the belief that we are hereafter to have, not only the best wishes and the best hopes of the community, but we are to receive from the foster-

ing hand of government, and the benefactions of individual munificence, whatever aid may be necessary for their well-being.

And here, as a matter of record, it may be well to place on the printed page, some facts in regard to the early history of agricultural improvement in the United States, and especially in our own Commonwealth. Human pursuits and enterprises are so intimately allied with each other, that no sooner is a discovery made in one part of the world, than its knowledge is extended to other sections and other persons who sympathize in the object of its advancement. Thus, the example of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, in 1785, the first on our continent, and with TIMOTHY PICKERING of Massachusetts as Secretary, was followed by the establishment of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, in 1792,—and thus stimulated by the efforts of these pioneer societies, the Middlesex County Society, in 1794, and the Berkshire Society, in 1811, were formed, not to speak of the thirty other incorporated agricultural societies in our State. And thus the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, formed in 1827, and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, formed in 1829, were the great leaders in the horticultural improvement which has now spread throughout the length and breadth of our land; and now we have of agricultural

and horticultural societies in our country, more than thirteen hundred. In no State in the Union has the influence of these early institutions been more distinctly visible in promoting the advancement of agriculture, and preparing the way for scientific agricultural education, than in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Board of Agriculture has from the first espoused the cause, and from this Board, let it here be remembered, have sprung the New England Agricultural Society, whose President has been actively engaged with us, and the United States Agricultural Society, which made this a prominent object, and which for eight years, and until the opening of our late civil war, was exercising a most happy influence on the government at Washington, as well as on the Union, and the agriculture of the States. The parent societies of agriculture and horticulture, to which we have already alluded, still live in a green old age, and are at work with us in the promotion of our good cause. These institutions were founded by men of liberal education, men who knew how to appreciate its advantages in the various pursuits of life. True, they were stigmatized as "book-farmers," but to them we are indebted mainly for the harvest we are now reaping.

The first movement on the part of our own State, in modern progress, was the appointment of HENRY COLMAN as State Commissioner, in 1836, for the agricultu-

ral survey of the State, but it was regarded by the legislature of so little importance that it was finally suspended in the year 1840. Lightly as his labors were then esteemed, their influence for good is felt to the present day. His reports on the character of Massachusetts soils, the reclamation of waste lands, the adaptation of crops, and other personal investigations, will ever be regarded as treasures of great practical knowledge, and as President CLARK truly remarks, "the money expended by the State has been returned many times, and will be every year while agriculture is practised."

FIRST GENERAL EFFORTS.

Although much had been written on the importance of science, as especially applicable to agriculture, no general efforts had been made for the establishment of Agricultural Colleges, or Schools, in this State until the year 1849. We had well endowed colleges and academies, institutions for the promotion of other arts and professions, but there were none in this or other States where a young man could acquire that most important of all arts, the art of becoming a scientific, and, therefore, a skilful farmer,—one who could, in turn, go out and teach the science to others.

In view of the need of such an institution, efforts

were made to arouse the attention of the public to the importance of the subject. This was one of the avowed motives of the founders of the Norfolk Agricultural Society, at whose first exhibition, on the 26th of September, 1849, the subject of agricultural education stood forth prominently. The suggestions of the address* were received with so much favor, that they became the topics of the day. It was voted by the Society that three thousand copies of the address be printed for public circulation. The occasion was made memorable by the presence of a galaxy of talent seldom congregated on a similar occasion, among whom may be named GEORGE N. BRIGGS, the Governor of the State, DANIEL WEBSTER, EDWARD EVERETT, HORACE MANN, LEVI LINCOLN, JOSIAH QUINCY, President of Harvard University, General HENRY A. S. DEARBORN, GOV. ISAAC HILL, of New Hampshire, Lieut. Gov. JOHN REED, and Rev. JOHN PIERPONT, D. D. Alas! all of these bright luminaries have sunk below the horizon; all have ceased from their labors, and gone to their rest. Nor would we forget the living: CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, ROBERT C. WINTHROP, JOSIAH QUINCY, Jr., whose sentiment on that occasion was too prophetic to be forgotten: "*The future meetings of the Norfolk Agricultural Society.* They may have better cattle — they

* By the President, MARSHALL P. WILDER.

may have a more extended show; but when will the breed of men, the native stock or the imported breed, equal that of their first meeting?" The primary object in the address alluded to, was to awaken a more general interest and immediate action, both by National and State legislation, in behalf of Agricultural Colleges and Schools. Space will only permit of incorporating in this address a few of the sentiments expressed on that occasion. Said Mr. EVERETT:—

"I need not enlarge on its importance, for here sits by my side the very apostle* of this inspired gospel, who has told us, over and over again, the advantages of education; but I will say, sir, that if the yeomanry of New England wish their principles to prevail, or their influence to be perpetuated over the country, the only way in which they can, for any length of time, effect this object, is to educate their children to understand these principles, and firmly and effectually to maintain them."

Said Mr. MANN:—

"I rejoiced, sir, when I heard you, to-day, magnify and extol the subject of scientific education for the farmer. It cannot be too much exalted; it cannot be too highly lauded. Those are the true views for all farmers, for all men who are to be engaged in this business, thus to become acquainted with mineralogy and botany, with the physiology, the pathology of plants, and thereby get possession of this machine, this wonderful apparatus, which has been produced for their use; and then, sir, we should have a yeomanry in this country, of which the nation might well be proud."

* Hon. HORACE MANN.

Encouraged by this favorable aspect, the counsel of these gentlemen, and leading agriculturists, it was deemed expedient to bring the subject of establishing an Agricultural College, or School, under the patronage of the government, immediately before the legislators of the State of Massachusetts. A bill for this purpose was therefore prepared, and introduced into the Senate at the next session of the legislature, in the winter of 1850.

After a free and full discussion of its merits, this bill passed the Senate, without a dissenting voice, providing for the establishment of an Agricultural College and an experimental farm.

But the bill was rejected in the House of Representatives, owing to the prejudice that existed against scientific farming, or what was then sarcastically termed "Book Farming," and thus Massachusetts was deprived of the honor of establishing the first Agricultural College in America, as she had already done the first free school on this continent. But thanks to the Giver of all good, the seed then sowed, watered by the tears and nourished by the prayers of its friends, finally germinated, and brought forth the College under whose auspices we meet to-day.

Few are aware of the difficulties and discouragements which attended the early efforts in behalf of this enterprise, or of the ridicule which was cast on

those who advocated mental culture as superior to physical power. Since that time a complete revolution has taken place in public sentiment, and now those who opposed the education of our young farmers in an Agricultural College, are among its warmest advocates; in fact, those who used to sneer at and taunt the movers as men of zeal, now join with us in praying for its prosperity.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS.

Much chagrin and disappointment were experienced at the loss of the bill alluded to; but the friends of the measure, nothing disheartened at its rejection, banded themselves together more firmly, believing that Massachusetts, so renowned for public and private munificence, for the endowment of institutions of learning and benevolence, and for the wisdom of her policy in the encouragement of domestic industry, would not much longer withhold her fostering hand from that cause upon which, more than any other, depended the advancement of all human pursuits. A resolve was therefore immediately prepared and submitted to the legislature for the creation of a Board of Commissioners, whose duty should be to report, at the next session, upon the expediency of establishing Agricultural Schools or Colleges.

This commission consisted of MARSHALL P.

WILDER, EDWARD HITCHCOCK, SAMUEL A. ELIOT, THOMAS E. PAYSON and ELI WARREN, and their report was made to the legislature at its session in 1851. This report embraced the investigations of Rev. Dr. HITCHCOCK, in regard to the Agricultural Schools and Colleges of Europe, and contained an account of more than three hundred and fifty of these institutions, large and small, embodying an amount of information and research, on the subjects referred to, never before communicated to the American people, and constituting a document of great value, which will ever redound to the honor of that lamented man. In concluding their report, the commissioners warmly commend the establishment of Agricultural Schools, stating, as reasons, "that agricultural education was of vital importance, not only to the farmers, but to the prosperity of the Commonwealth;" "that it has been the custom of the State to dispense her funds for educational purposes; and that in view of these facts, the commissioners recommend an appropriation of twenty thousand dollars for the purpose of establishing a central Agricultural College, with a model and experimental farm, said institution to be open to all classes of the Commonwealth, and in the government of which the State shall be interested as far as may be deemed expedient;" and further, "that a State Department of Agriculture be established, to consist of one member from, and to be

elected by, each of the incorporated agricultural societies now receiving the bounty of the State, which Board shall have power to locate or organize, and put in operation, the College contemplated by the foregoing recommendations."

CENTRAL BOARD.

Simultaneous with this movement, and in prosecution of the original design, the Norfolk Agricultural Society, on the 28th day of January, 1851, authorized the president and secretaries of the society to call a public convention of delegates, from the various agricultural societies of the Commonwealth, the object of which should be to concert measures for their mutual advantage, and for the promotion of agricultural education.

In accordance with this invitation, the convention assembled at the State House in Boston, March the 20th, 1851, largely represented by delegations from the different societies, as well as by other friends.

The President addressed the convention upon the objects of its meeting, "hoping that the cause of agricultural education now to be submitted to the legislature would receive the deliberate consideration of this body, and, if it be the opinion of this convention, that agriculture may be promoted by the application of science, that such a sentiment may be expressed in

terms so explicit as not to be misunderstood, and that the aid of government may be solicited for this purpose." Another object of this convention was to establish a Department of Agriculture at the capitol, as a part of the State government, which measure was immediately presented to the legislature, then in session, and the joint committee of agriculture reported a bill for the creation of a Board of Agriculture, analogous to the Board of Education, similar to the Act now in force. But the further consideration of the subject, after much debate, was referred to the next legislature.

This being a new measure, its possible failure was apprehended. Therefore it was deemed expedient to establish a Central Board of Agriculture, whose duties should be substantially those which were proposed for a State Department.

Its board of officers were MARSHALL P. WILDER, President; HENRY W. CUSHMAN and JOHN W. LINCOLN, Vice-Presidents; ALLEN W. DODGE, Corresponding Secretary; EDGAR K. WHITTAKER, Recording Secretary, together with three delegates from each of the incorporated societies. Here was adopted the following resolutions, upon which the subsequent action of the Board in regard to agricultural education was based:—

Resolved, That agricultural schools having been found, by the experience of other nations, efficient means of promoting the cause of agricultural education, which is so essential to the prosperity of farmers and to the welfare of communities, it becomes at once the duty and policy of the Commonwealth to establish and maintain such institutions for the benefit of all its inhabitants.

Resolved, That the several plans for an agricultural school, recently reported by the board of commissioners appointed for that purpose, are worthy the profound consideration of the people of Massachusetts and their representatives in the General Court, as indicating the feasibility and practicability of an establishment worthy that exalted character which the State has secured by the endowment of kindred institutions, designed, like these, for the diffusion of useful knowledge among the people.

The Board met again, September 3, 1851, when a committee of five was chosen to report on the subject of agricultural education. The president, in behalf of the committee, made a report, the concluding resolution of which was as follows:—

Resolved, That Massachusetts has always taken a leading part in most of the great enterprises which mark the progress of society ; that she is worthy of the high character she has secured by the endowment of institutions for the diffusion of useful knowledge among the people, and that, by the adoption of efficient measures for the professional education of her farmers, and the better development of her agricultural resources, she will add another wreath to her renown for the elevation of her sons, and the advancement of the best interests of society.

The Board met again January 14, 1852, at which time the committee on the subject reported that, in conformity with the directions of the Board, a memorial embracing the investigations of Rev. Dr. HITCHCOCK, and the conclusions of the commissioners, had been presented to the legislature. This memorial was signed by EDWARD EVERETT, as Chairman of the Executive Committee, and by the officers of the Board, and to it was appended the following: —

Resolved, That, inasmuch as agriculture is the chief occupation of her citizens, the Commonwealth, in the organization of its government, should be provided with a Department of Agriculture, with offices commensurate with the importance of the duties to be discharged and the labors to be performed.

This memorial was received with favor by the legislature, and resulted in the creation of the present State Department of Agriculture, which was to succeed the existing voluntary Central Board. The Act was passed in 1852, and the present Secretary of the Board, Hon. CHARLES L. FLINT, entered upon the duties of his office, February, 1853.

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE.

In all these previous movements, the subject of an Agricultural College had not been forgotten, but it was evident that the public mind was not prepared for it; in fact, its friends came to the conclusion that

the term, a *School* of Agriculture, was more consonant to the times than an institution of larger calibre.

From the year 1851, when the report on the Agricultural Schools of Europe was made, no special efforts were made for the establishment of a College. Those, therefore, who favored a College, were so much disappointed by the action of the legislature in rejecting the bill for a College, that they resolved on the establishment of a School or Schools of Agriculture, and to look to private munificence for aid, rather than to the government. In accordance with this idea, some of the gentlemen who had been most active in the project for planting a College, now associated together for the establishment of a School, and finally, in the winter of 1856, obtained an Act of incorporation under the title of the Massachusetts School of Agriculture. The persons named in the Act were MARSHALL P. WILDER, BENJAMIN V. FRENCH, GEORGE W. LYMAN, SETH SPRAGUE, MOSES NEWELL, RICHARD S. FAY and SAMUEL HOOPER, who were empowered to hold, by bequest, gift, purchase or otherwise, real and personal estate, not exceeding five hundred thousand dollars, for the purpose of conducting and maintaining an experimental farm and school thereon. This plan seemed to accord better with the phase of public sentiment, and efforts were in progress for the establishment of such a school,

which promised to be successful. A liberal proposal had been received from the heirs of WILLIAM H. CARY, at Lexington, for the establishment of it in that town, another from the city of Springfield, where nearly forty thousand dollars had been subscribed, and an offer of the town farm and buildings had been made by the city on condition of locating the School there.

The Board of Trustees at that time was increased to thirteen. Its officers were: MARSHALL P. WILDER, President; WILLIAM S. CLARK, Corresponding Secretary; E. W. BOND, Recording Secretary; HENRY ALEXANDER, Jr., Treasurer. In their report of April, 1861, the Trustees state that they have been induced to locate the School in Springfield, and expressed the hope that they might, at no distant day, lay the foundation of the Massachusetts School of Agriculture, as one of the permanent institutions of the State.

The interest which had been awakened in Massachusetts and some other States, on the subject of agricultural education, and the movements in the State and National assemblies for its promotion, kept the public mind alive, and furnished the theme for most of the addresses at agricultural exhibitions.

The United States Agricultural Society, established at Washington in 1852, being an emanation from our

State Board, immediately took up the subject, and during its existence, for eight years, and until the opening of the late civil war, advocated strongly the duty of the nation to afford governmental aid for agricultural education.

In 1857, Michigan established an independent College, and the Massachusetts School of Agriculture was to be planted at Springfield; but in the year 1858 the attention of Congress was called specially to the subject by the Hon. JUSTIN S. MORRILL, representative, and now senator, from Vermont. All honor to his name, and we most gratefully acknowledge the pleasure of his presence on this occasion.

Mr. MORRILL submitted a bill, appropriating a portion of the public lands for the endowment of a College in each State, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislature of the State may prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes and professions of life.

After prolonged discussions for two sessions, this bill passed both Houses of Congress, and was sent to the President for his approval, but, contrary to the hopes of its friends, it was vetoed by JAMES BUCHANAN, President of the United States.

NATIONAL GRANT.

The friends of the measure were greatly disappointed, but the favor of Congress having been secured they believed that the one-man power would not long withhold this boon from the farmers of the nation.

Mr. MORRILL, whose speeches were most replete in powerful argument, cogent reasons and patriotic motives, with unflinching perseverance stood as chief engineer at the helm, till finally, in July, 1862, the bill was enacted, thus reserving for ABRAHAM LINCOLN the immortal honor of placing his sign manual to an Act scarcely less important in its bearings on the welfare of the nation, than his ever memorable proclamation of universal freedom to its inhabitants.

Governor ANDREW, with his usual benevolence and far-sighted policy, in his message of 1863 to the legislature, recommended the acceptance of this National grant, and submitted his views, in an elaborate and able manner, with reference to a plan for uniting the National fund with the Bussey fund, given to Harvard College for a similar purpose. The plan and recommendations of Gov. ANDREW were referred to a joint special committee, of which the Rev. E. O. HAVEN, D. D., of the Senate, was chairman, a gentleman distinguished both as a theologian and a friend of education. The subject became one of general concernment. Frequent and protracted hearings were

held by the committee. Several plans were presented, with reference to bestowing a part of the income of the fund on existing institutions, the most prominent of which was the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, located in Boston, and claiming the duty and right to be trusted with education in the mechanic arts. In all these hearings and discussions, the Board of Agriculture was represented by a committee, through whom was expressed the opinion of the leading agriculturists of our State, in the following:—

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Board, the interests of the State and the intention of Congress require that the grant should be principally devoted to the establishment of an educational institution for the practical and scientific study of agriculture, and for the instruction of youths who intend to follow industrial pursuits, and that the institution should not be immediately connected with any institution established for other purposes.

So strong and decided were the convictions of this joint committee of the Board in favor of an independent College, "that were the valuable Bussey Farm in West Roxbury, and all the fund devoted by the will of Mr. Bussey to the promotion of agricultural education, amounting to more than two hundred thousand dollars, offered to them for the foundation of an Agricultural College, and to be *placed wholly under their control, only on the condition* that the College should

be located on the Bussey Farm in West Roxbury, and also that a portion of this grant should be added thereto, they would decidedly prefer not to take the Bussey Farm, and not to take the two hundred thousand dollars from the Bussey estate, incumbered with that simple condition; but would deliberately prefer to take their portion of the congressional grant alone, whatever it may be, and use it for the support of an Agricultural College in some other part of the State."

The chairman, Dr. HAVEN, remarks, "so decided an opinion from so respectable a body appeared, to the committee, entitled to great weight." And in his argument before the Senate, on the bill which he then submitted for the establishment of this College, he expressed the opinion, that although he had at first been favorably inclined to Gov. ANDREW'S plan, he would now advocate an independent College.

And here let me say, we do not object to a Department of Agriculture in other Colleges in States where the fund is not sufficient to establish independent institutions; but let it be remembered that from the first inception of measures, the friends in Massachusetts held steadfastly to the idea that Massachusetts must have an independent Agricultural College, located in a rural district and not in the suburbs of a great city.

The bill passed the legislature, and thus the State, by the acceptance of the National grant, became at

once the proprietor, not only, but the parent and patron of the College, and by this Act, which gave to the Institute of Technology a portion of the fund, for the advancement of the mechanic arts, our institution became the only College in the United States designed exclusively for the education of farmers.

And here let it be remembered, that although Gov. ANDREW adhered firmly to his plan for locating the College on the Bussey Farm, until after the passage of the bill, he promptly approved it, and with that integrity and magnanimity which ever distinguished his character, he said, "I thought I was right, but the people will not have it so, and I cordially submit."

Measures were then immediately instituted for the location of the College; one-tenth part of the land scrip, by the Act of Congress to be used for the purpose of purchasing a farm, was placed in the hands of the corporation, under the provision "that said College shall first secure, by subscriptions or otherwise, the further sum of seventy-five thousand dollars, for the erection of suitable buildings thereon."

COMMENCEMENT AND LOCATION.

The hour will not permit of further details in regard to location, purchase of the farm, erection of buildings, &c., or the various progressive operations of the College, all of which are recorded in the annual

reports to the legislature. Suffice it to say, that the clouds of fears and doubts which for so many years had overshadowed the horizon of our hopes were fast retiring, gilded by the promise of brighter prospects and better days.

A new era had dawned in the agriculture of our country. The time had now come when Massachusetts was to have an Agricultural College, where she could give to her young farmers similar advantages to those which she had provided for other classes in her system of educational institutions; "the location, plan of organization, and course of study, to be approved by the governor and council." Propositions from various portions of the State, for the location of the College, were received, the most prominent of which were, the one already alluded to from Lexington, and from Amherst, which town generously subscribed seventy-five thousand dollars, in addition to a promised donation of the Messrs. HILLS of ten thousand dollars, as a fund to aid in the establishment of a botanic garden.

The Trustees accepted the propositions from the town of Amherst, purchased the present farm, commenced the erection of its buildings, and opened its doors for the reception of students on the second day of October, 1867, when its first class of thirty-three young men appeared soliciting instruction.

Its first President was the Hon. HENRY F. FRENCH, author of a popular work entitled "Farm Drainage," who had recently returned from Europe, where he had made a tour of agricultural observation.

President FRENCH immediately removed to Amherst, where he concerted plans and a course of study for the establishment of the College, which were accepted by the Trustees, and approved by the Governor and Council. President FRENCH resigned his office, removed to Boston, and resumed his professional labors. In this critical juncture, it became a matter of great anxiety who should be his successor.

The attention of the Trustees was at once turned to the Hon. P. A. CHADBOURNE, then a professor in Williams College, a gentleman celebrated for his scientific attainments and executive ability. He was unanimously elected by the Trustees, and after strong solicitations accepted the office. With that energy and enterprise which have ever characterized his labors for human improvement, he soon placed matters preparatory to its reception of students in a promising condition; but after a few months he was compelled to resign the presidency, and remove to the West, for the benefit of his health.

The retirement of President CHADBOURNE, to whom the Trustees and the public looked as the herald of progress and prosperity, created general regret;

but when it was ascertained that the present incumbent, Col. WILLIAM S. CLARK, then a professor in Amherst College, and just returned from honorable service on the battle-field of his country, might accept the office and hereafter devote his energies to the teaching of young men how to improve the soil, as well as to defend it, and how to make it more and more worth defending, he was immediately and unanimously elected to the office.

So well has he discharged these duties, that neither he or the public can wish for a better testimonial than this occasion furnishes. During the administration of Col. CLARK, the growth and progress of the institution have been of the most gratifying character, constantly inspiring the public with confidence, and meeting fully the most sanguine hopes of its friends. Neither is it too much to say, that no other Agricultural College in the Union presents better facilities for young men to become truly intelligent and successful farmers.

IMPORTANCE OF THE COLLEGE.

The importance and value of the College to the State and country, especially to the farmer, in the adaptation and increase of agricultural products, reclaiming our waste lands, improving and adorning our homesteads, enhancing the value of real estate,

and multiplying the blessings and comforts of life, cannot be too highly prized; nor should we forget in all this its especial object is to elevate, to the most honorable and useful position, that large class of society, our young men who are to cultivate the soil, and upon whose calling must ever rest, more than upon any other, the happiness of the civilized world. And who that has ever reflected for a moment upon the influence of educated labor, does not see the importance of it as the great agency of a high and progressive state of civilization? With a proper knowledge of science, with a discreet diversification of crops, and with the advantages of ready markets, even the soil of New England, though rough and rocky, is capable of competing successfully with the most favored portions of our country, and this knowledge it is the object of the College and mission of its graduates to impart.

If by the application of science we can fathom the depths of nature, explore her secret springs, learn how her curious machinery acts, unfold and explain her mysterious processes, learn how she prepares in her secret laboratory the appropriate nutriment for the more than one hundred thousand species of the vegetable kingdom, — from the humblest flower which nestles close to the bosom of the earth, only blooming to die, to the lofty Sequoia, rearing its head to the

very heavens, and braving the tempests for thousands of years, all as capable of assimilating and digesting their proper elements as man himself,—shall we not do it? If by chemical analysis we can ascertain what are the constituents of soil, crops and manures, or in what elements they are deficient; their proper adaptation to each other; the diseases to which the animal and vegetable kingdoms are subject, and discover the remedies for each, shall we hesitate to do it? These sciences have wrought wonders in our own day, and are destined to still greater achievements. How wonderful the progress! Man has seized upon the very elements of nature, and made them subservient to his use.

Objections have been made that some of the scholars go to the College for the purpose of obtaining a first-rate education, and not specially for the purpose of becoming farmers. Well, be it so; it is a laudable motive on their part, and no fault of the College. Massachusetts can offer no more beneficent boon to her sons; and we hesitate not to aver, that any student who can graduate at this institution, whether he be destined to become a farmer, minister, lawyer, physician or tradesman, will be quite as capable of earning his living as he would if he had received his education at any other College; and we believe that whatever his object might have been on

entering the institution, the chances are, he will come out an intelligent cultivator of the soil, a lover of nature, a better man and a better citizen. We do, therefore, most earnestly exhort the good people, and especially the farmers of Massachusetts, to appreciate the great advantages which are placed before them by the wise and liberal provision which the government has made for the education of their sons. Let our young men, instead of rushing to the crowded marts of business, to become highly civilized and distinguished in life, resort to our Agricultural Colleges, and learn that the highest triumph of civilization is the conquest of mind over matter; the dominion of man over nature,—improving, adorning and elevating her to the noblest purposes of creation. This seems to have been the criterion of a high state of civilization and refinement, from the day when “Adam toiled and Eve delved” in the Garden of Eden; and the Bible, in its frequent allusions to trees and plants, fruits and flowers, grass and grain, furnishes some of the most instructive lessons, and the most sublime and exalted metaphors, of all that is beautiful in imagery, excellent in character and hopeful in destiny.

The surprising manner in which the College has overcome all doubts and fears, as well as ridicule and opposition of the faithless, and actually commands the respect of both friend and foe, should encourage

the government as well as private individuals to aid in its advancement. Let our rich men come forward and complete the work so well begun. This is the Massachusetts College; and if they would connect their names with an institution alike popular, useful and permanent, let them erect buildings, endow prizes, scholarships, and chairs of science. Let them provide funds for experiments, for books, and for the arboretum and botanic garden. For this last we want a fund of fifty thousand dollars, the income of which might be applied to pay indigent students for labor in keeping it in order, thus encouraging habits of industry and manly self-reliance. We have the land, the plan devised, the **DURFEE PLANT-HOUSE**, and the **HILLS FUND** for the purchase of trees and plants. Let this be done. Other institutions, and other countries,* have these attached to their seminaries; and what more honorable testimonial can a man leave to posterity, than a department, which shall afford instruction and pleasure to future generations, in one of the most useful and beautiful studies of nature?

CONCLUSION:

I rejoice to meet on this occasion His Excellency the Governor of the State, who has ever manifested a lively interest in the welfare of this institution.

* Kew Gardens, near London; Jardin des Plantes, Paris; Prospect Park, Brooklyn; Department of Agriculture, Washington.

I rejoice to meet also, so many of the friends who from the first have been steadfast supporters of our efforts, whose efficiency has contributed largely to the success of our enterprise. While we drop a tear of grateful remembrance over the graves of our departed associates, we would not forget one who still lives, our worthy and esteemed friend, PAOLI LATHROP, whose interest in our cause has endeared him to us from the first, though his infirmity for many years has deprived us of his presence, but who has our sincere sympathy. May the remainder of his days be as tranquil and serene as his life has been exemplary and useful.

Never before have the friends of agriculture in Massachusetts met under circumstances so gratifying as the present, so full of hope for the future.

While we rejoice with unaffected pride in the success which has crowned the labors to establish a first-class Agricultural College in our own State, we would also acknowledge the satisfaction we feel in the progress and prosperity of similar institutions, especially in the opening of the Bussey Institution, under the supervision of Harvard University. "And let no one fear," said Dr. HITCHCOCK, "that we shall have too many of these. Those countries in Europe where they are most numerous, are the most inclined to mul-

tiply them; and my conviction is, that ere fifty years have passed, the State will find she needs more of them."

Nor can I, in the presence of these young gentlemen who have this day graduated, refrain from a brief allusion to the beneficial and positive tendency of the calling they have chosen, in promoting the welfare of the State and the happiness of her population.

The cultivation of the soil as a science is the most rational and interesting that ever occupied the attention of the human family. Whatever gratification may be derived from other pursuits, there is surely none to which we can look with so much confidence in its effect on the moral condition of society, the welfare of the nation and the destiny of the world. Said Dr. HITCHCOCK, "A great principle is involved in the science of agriculture, which reaches through indefinite generations, and forms the basis of all possible improvements and of the highest hopes of our race." We cannot, therefore, too highly appreciate the importance of training up our sons, and our daughters, to a taste for rural life and rural pursuits, thus promoting a stronger love for home, kindred and country. Well did Mr. CLAY say, "My name will be remembered with more pleasure and gratitude, by those

that know me, for my devotion to agriculture and the mechanic arts, than all my long life in politics."

The more, therefore, we instil into the minds of our youth a love of nature, the more will they appreciate this sentiment; and the more they reflect on the beauty and perfection of this fair creation, the more will their souls become invested with that purity and refinement which lead the mind to contemplate, with devotion and gratitude, the wisdom and infinitude of that Almighty hand which carpets the earth with living gems, scarcely less brilliant or numerous than the glittering host above; which sends nature forth, instinct with God in her brightest and most beautiful habiliments, to attract, gratify and delight the senses. Well did LINNÆUS remark, when discovering a new principle in nature, "I have seen God passing by." How truly Mr. EMERSON describes this sentiment, "He who knows the most, he who knows what sweets and virtues are in the ground, and how to come at these enchantments, is the rich and royal man."

And what more precious monument can we raise than a living memorial, which shall continue to grow and minister to the sustenance of our race when we have passed from earth. I had rather have the honor of producing a new grain, fruit or flower, suited to extensive cultivation, which shall bear my name long after I shall have ceased from my labors, than any

other earthly distinction. Far better this, than piles of polished granite or pillars of lying marble. Let me be remembered as one who has done something to improve nature and embellish mother earth—something to relieve toil, reward labor and add to the comforts of life—something which shall contribute to the support, taste and refinement of the advancing millions who are to people this continent.

I would also now congratulate the people of this good old Commonwealth upon the auspicious circumstances under which the first Graduation Day of her College is celebrated. This certainly awakens the most pleasing anticipations of future usefulness, and encourages the belief that, as in the past, Massachusetts, with that wisdom of policy for which she is so justly renowned in the education of her sons, and with that sense of justice and personal honor which has ever characterized her in the great moral enterprises of the age, will not be outdone by any of her sister States in the promotion of the cause we seek to advance. With a wise foresight she has accepted the grant of Congress, with a paternal regard she has made liberal appropriations for the support of her College, and having put her hand to the plough, there will be no looking back.

Agricultural schools are as intimately connected with the welfare of the Commonwealth as normal

schools, and they should provide teachers for the generation of farmers who are to acquire the means of living on the soil, so that every young man who has a desire to remain on the old homestead, a taste for rural life, or a thirst for this knowledge, may have the privilege of attaining to the honorable and useful position of an intelligent cultivator of the soil.

May the future anniversaries of this College be as glorious as the present, and may it ever be enough to say of Massachusetts, as we progress in the good work of educating the yeomanry of our State, in the words of her illustrious statesman and distinguished farmer on another occasion, "There she is; behold her!"

And here I desire for myself, and in behalf of those with whom I have been associated, to acknowledge the goodness of that Divine Providence which has prolonged our lives and permitted us to witness the establishment of an Agricultural College in Massachusetts.

It is not often that the projectors of like enterprises are permitted to reap the harvest of their sowing. Soon, all of those who twenty years ago were banded together for the promotion of agricultural education in this State will have gone to their reward; but I esteem it as among the choicest reminiscences of my life, that I have enjoyed the friendship of those wise

and good men. I have climbed the summit of the hill of life, and am descending on the other side. Ere long I shall reach the valley below and be buried in the bosom of my mother earth; but while I live, I shall labor with such ability as I possess to promote the welfare of this College, and the good cause which we have so long had at heart. May this institution live on, prospering and to prosper. May it rise higher and higher in the scale of popular favor and usefulness, sharing the good-will of the people, the munificence of noble-hearted men, and the fostering care of a generous government. In the words uttered by me twenty-two years ago: "Let our agricultural papers and periodicals continue their noble advocacy of this cause; let the voice of the eloquent advocate it in the halls of legislation, and throughout the length and breadth of our land; let efficient hands and warm hearts engage in it, and then the public mind cannot slumber, agricultural education will advance, and we shall have among our yeomanry such farmers as the world never before witnessed,—men who will honor their vocation, and therefore be honored by society, the chiefs of our land, the bulwark of our nation."

And now, with a heart full of gratitude for the kind appreciation of my poor labors which has been expressed on this occasion, let me say, that when I

reflect on the opposition, indifference and doubts which have encountered our efforts for the establishment of this College, even from the farmers, and contrast these with this auspicious day, I beg to close this address with the reverent use of the language of Divine inspiration, "And now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."



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